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MIDSOMER NORTON URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

Report of the Medical Officer of Health
For the Year 1906.

To the Midsomer Norton Urban District Council.

GENTLEMEN,—I beg to present my report of health for the year 1906, together with the six tables of statistics required by the Local Government Board and the Secretary of State.

Population.—Estimated to the middle of the year at 6,188.

Geology.—The soil in the valleys is clay overlying conglomerate rock; on the high grounds reddish loam overlying beds of lias. The land is mainly pasture, and is well-timbered. The water supply in the fields on the hills is chiefly derived from shallow wells, and from ponds and streams in the lowlands.

Occupations.—Coal-mining, agriculture, manufacturing boots and shoes and brewing.

Births.—The number of births registered during the year was 170: 76 boys and 94 girls, giving a birth rate of 27·47 per 1,000 persons living in the district. The following table gives the number of births registered in each quarter of the year:—

| | Boys. | Girls. | Total. |
|----------------|-------|--------|--------|
| 1st quarter .. | 21 | 30 | 51 |
| 2nd quarter .. | 20 | 19 | 39 |
| 3rd quarter.. | 17 | 30 | 47 |
| 4th quarter.. | 18 | 15 | 33 |
| | 76 | 94 | 170 |

Deaths.—The number of deaths registered during the year was 77: 38 males and 39 females, giving a death-rate of 12·4 per 1,000 persons living in the district. The following table gives the mortality in each quarter of the year with the respective death-rate:—

| | Males. | Females. | Total. | Rate. |
|----------------|--------|----------|--------|-------|
| 1st quarter .. | 9 | 14 | 23 | 14·8 |
| 2nd quarter.. | 10 | 4 | 14 | 9·0 |
| 3rd quarter .. | 12 | 11 | 23 | 14·8 |
| 4th quarter .. | 7 | 10 | 17 | 11·1 |
| | 38 | 39 | 77 | 12·4 |

The following table gives the mortality in the various localities of the district:—

| | | |
|----------------------------|----|----|
| Midsomer Norton and Welton | .. | 55 |
| Clandown .. | .. | 14 |
| Downside .. | .. | 5 |
| Westfields .. | .. | 2 |
| Clapton .. | .. | 1 |
| | | 77 |

The causes of death at all ages were:—

| | | | |
|---------------------|---|-----------------------|---|
| Diphtheria .. | 3 | Gastritis .. | 1 |
| Influenza .. | 2 | Valvular Heart Dis- | |
| Pneumonia .. | 4 | ease .. | 3 |
| Acute Bronchitis .. | 4 | Heart Disease: Fatty | |
| Chronic Bronchitis | 3 | Degeneration .. | 1 |
| Pulmonary Phthisis | 4 | Syncope .. | 1 |
| Asthma .. | 1 | Cerebral Hæmorr- | |
| Abdominal Tuber- | | hage .. | 6 |
| culosis .. | 1 | Premature Birth .. | 3 |
| Meningitis (Tuber- | | Inanition .. | 3 |
| cular) .. | 1 | Gangrene .. | 2 |
| Meningitis .. | 2 | Senile Decay .. | 3 |
| Convulsions .. | 1 | Cancer .. | 6 |
| Epilepsy .. | 1 | Rickets .. | 1 |
| Paralysis .. | 1 | Pernicious Anæmia | 1 |
| Abscess of Bowel .. | 1 | Chronic Bright's | |
| Intestinal Obstruc- | | Disease .. | 5 |
| tion .. | 2 | Accidents .. | 2 |
| Hæmorrhage from | | Suffocation .. | 1 |
| Intestine .. | 1 | (Coroner's Inquest). | |
| Enteritis .. | 1 | Cirrhosis of Liver .. | 3 |

The following are the ages at which death took place:—

| | |
|--------------------------|----|
| 12 months under .. | 14 |
| 1 year and under 5 .. | 7 |
| 5 years and under 15 .. | 5 |
| 15 years and under 25 .. | 3 |
| 25 years and under 65 .. | 19 |
| 65 years and upwards .. | 29 |

There were 14 deaths under one year, which gives an infant mortality rate of 82·3.

The causes of infant mortality were:—

| | | | |
|------------------------|---|----------------|---|
| Acute Bronchitis .. | 3 | Convulsions .. | 1 |
| Premature Birth .. | 3 | Hæmorrhage .. | 1 |
| Inanition .. | 3 | Enteritis .. | 1 |
| Suffocation (Coroner's | | Gastritis .. | 1 |
| Inquest) .. | 1 | | |

The following deaths have occurred from zymotic disease:—

| | |
|---------------|---|
| Diphtheria .. | 3 |
|---------------|---|

The zymotic death-rate is 48 per 1,000 inhabitants in the district.

Infectious Diseases.—The following cases have been notified during the year:—

| | |
|------------------|----|
| Scarlet Fever .. | 58 |
| Diphtheria .. | 21 |
| Erysipelas .. | 8 |
| Varicella .. | 53 |
| Typhoid .. | 1 |

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Sickness.—A serious outbreak of 18 cases of diphtheria occurred during the first and second quarters resulting in three deaths, and the Day and Sunday-schools were closed for one month. Three more cases occurred subsequently in the third and fourth quarters, making altogether 21 cases.

One diphtheria patient was summoned before the Kilmerdon bench of magistrates, and fined for exposing himself in a public thoroughfare during the period of isolation.

An unusually large number of scarlet fever cases occurred during the year, chiefly in the second quarter. This was doubtless due to inefficient isolation from the want of adequate hospital accommodation. Cases of diphtheria were under treatment at the hospital, and as the accommodation will not permit the admission of two diseases at the same time, the scarlet fever patients had to be isolated at their homes as well as circumstances would allow. This, in many cottages, practically meant no isolation in the strict sense of the word.

Sanitation: Isolation Hospital.—Thirteen cases were removed to the hospital: five cases of scarlet fever, and eight of diphtheria during the year. The accommodation at the cottage used as an isolation hospital does not meet the requirements of the district. I would again draw the Council's attention to the fact that no arrangement exists for the immediate isolation of smallpox patients.

Housing of the Working Classes.—A number of new houses have been erected in North-road, Radstock-road and Norton-hill, and several in outlying districts. There are a number of old back-to-back houses with no through ventilation, these chiefly occur in Welton; the approaches in and around Belle Vue, Welton, are generally in a disgusting state of filth and disorder.

Pathways.—Footways are much needed at the road sides; the accommodation for pedestrians is exceedingly bad and scanty compared with other towns. The approaches and footways to new houses and terraces is still insufficiently considered.

House Refuse and Scavenging.—The removal of house and other refuse is not undertaken by the Council. Such a state of affairs as now exists is highly injurious to health, and should not be allowed to continue in a town with the population of Midsomer Norton.

Disinfection.—No apparatus is provided for disinfecting clothing or bedding. Sulphur fumigation and washing with carbolic acid are used for rooms. A large spray for disfectants would be of great use and most efficacious.

Prevention of Consumption.—The notification of this disease would be of benefit to the district.

Water Supply.—During the early part of the year the Council's spring at Chilcompton became contaminated, and a source of much anxiety for some time. The Council's attention has been drawn on several occasions to the unsatisfactory nature of this supply, which becomes red coloured shortly after heavy rain. A supply so easily effected by surface water must always be looked upon with suspicion.

Sewerage and Drainage.—Midsomer Norton and Clandown are to a large extent sewered. Downside and Clapton and outlying houses are provided with

earth closets and cesspits. The houses at Westfield, Norton-hill-terraces, Norton-hill-villas, North-road and Chilcompton-road are still without any system of drainage.

Slaughter Houses.—There are four licensed slaughter-houses in use in Midsomer Norton.

Mortuary.—The district is still without a mortuary, the necessity of providing one has been brought to the Council's notice on previous occasions.

Dairies, Milkshops and Cowsheds.—These are inspected and a register kept.

Factories and Workshops Act, 1901.—There are 11 factories, 35 workshops, 22 out-workers' premises, 6 bakehouses and 4 laundries on the register in this district. With a view to meeting the requirements of the Act 76 inspections have been made of out-workers' premises, and 119 inspections of factories and workshops. Arising from these, 16 notices were served to remedy defects.

Details of house-to-house inspections and cases of overcrowding are given in the Sanitary Inspector's annual report.

Appended are the tables of statistics.

I have the honour to be, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

ARTHUR BULLEID,

Medical Officer of Health.

January 30th, 1907.

**MIDSOMER NORTON URBAN
DISTRICT COUNCIL.**

REPORT

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health

For the Year 1906.

FROM :

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